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# House Unit Says Report on Mines Arrived Jan. 31 Asserts Panel Watched Actions in Nicaragua

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WASHINGTON, April 13 — The House Select Committee on Intelligence was informed about United States involvement in the mining of Nicaraguan ports in late January and it later monitored the operation closely, according to the committee's chairman.

The chairman, Representative Edward P. Boland, Democrat of Massachusetts, said during House debate late Thursday that the Central Intelligence Agency informed the panel about the mining on Jan. 31 after some of the explosive devices had been planted at Puerto Sandino on Nicaragua's Pacific coast.

Reported by Managua on Jan. 3

Although Mr. Boland has been a leading opponent of the C.I.A.'s covert activities in Nicaragua, and his remarks on Thursday were highly critical of the mining, he did not fault the C.I.A. for failing to notify Congress.

His comments added to growing evidence that Congress was informed about the mining by the Reagan Administration well before a flurry of reports last week about the C.I.A.'s role in the operation.

Although most members of Congress were presumably aware that Nicaraguan harbors were being mined — Mr. Boland said the mining was first revealed by the Managua radio on Jan. 3 — the current furor in Congress developed after the extent of direct American involvement was disclosed in news reports last week.

## Goldwater Letter

Mr. Boland made his comments during debate about a nonbinding resolution that opposed the use of Federal funds to mine Nicaraguan waters. The House approved the resolution late Thursday by a vote of 281 to 111. Mr. Boland supported the resolution, which was overwhelmingly approved earlier this week by the Senate.

Several members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence have accused the C.I.A. of failing to inform the panel about the mining. Earlier this week, the chairman of the Senate committee, Senator Barry M. Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, sent a scathing letter to William J. Casey, the director of Central Intelligence, complaining about the lack of notification.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, the vice chairman of the committee, said earlier this week that he had not seen the report before voting on April 5 in favor of \$21 million in new funding for the covert activities in Nicaragua. Mr. Moynihan said, however, that he had received a "a quick brief before the vote" from Gary J. Schmitt, the committee's minority staff director.

Other committee members, including Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, have said that the committee was informed about the mining.

Mr. Boland, in an apparent reference to the Senate committee, said, "There's been some complaint that some other body was not keeping pace with what was happening." He added: "That's their responsibility. I knew what my responsibility was."

The House and Senate committees, while ostensibly sharing responsibility for overseeing the intelligence community, often concentrate on different issues and frequently disagree about intelligence matters. During the last year, the House committee has twice voted against providing aid to Nicaraguan rebels while the Senate committee has supported the program.

Mr. Boland, according to colleagues, made his remarks on Thursday, in part, to show that the House committee was more attentive to following the C.I.A.'s covert activities. Mr. Boland, according to the colleagues, also thought the C.I.A. was being unfairly blamed for keeping Congress ignorant of the mining.

## Considered a Moderate

Because of his visibility in recent months as a critic of the covert activities, Mr. Boland may also have wanted to show some support for the agency, the colleagues said. Mr. Boland, a moderate Democrat from Springfield, is known in the House as a cautious lawmaker who prefers to avoid confrontations with the C.I.A.

Mr. Boland's description of the C.I.A.'s talks with Congress about the harbor mining generally conformed with accounts given by intelligence officials.

Mr. Boland said that in the first briefing on the mining, on Jan. 31, intelligence officials said the waters off Puerto Sandino had been mined. Apparently pressed by the committee to justify the mining of a Nicaraguan port, C.I.A. officials, according to Mr. Boland, said Puerto Sandino "was not a harbor, it's an anchorage." Mr. Boland, dismissing the characterization, told the House, "Of course, they're wrong."

## 'Enough to Warn Other Ships'

The remainder of the mining, which was concentrated at Puerto Sandino and Puerto Corinto, also on the Pacific coast, took place in February, Mr. Boland said.

The House committee held a second briefing about the mining on March 27, Mr. Boland said. "The indication then was that they were mining other harbors and had mined them before that briefing," Mr. Boland said. He said the C.I.A. reported that the mines had "hit some seven ships between the dates of March 7 and March 24."

"What kind of ships?" he asked, answering, "Japanese ships — freighters — loading cotton, Panamanian ships with molasses, a Russian ship with oil, some other, small shipping boats hit by mines, not lethal, but enough to warn other ships coming into those waters that there was a real danger."

Administration officials have said the actual placement of the mines in Nicaraguan territorial waters was handled by a team of Latin American commandos trained by the C.I.A.

Intelligence officials reiterated today that the Senate intelligence committee was notified about the mining in briefings on March 8 and March 13, although they said the subject was not discussed at length. On April 2, they

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